THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : குழந்தைகளை ஆஸ்பத்திரிக்கு எடுத்துச் செல்லும்போதும், வயோதியஸ்தர்களாகவும், பெண்களாகவும் இருந்தால், அவர்கள் தங்கள் குழந்தைகளையோ மற்றவர்களையோ துணையாக அழைத்துக்கொண்டு போவதற்கும் அனுமதித்திருக்கிறோம். ஆனால் உல்லாசமாக தம்பதிகள் சைக்கில் ரிக்ஷாவில் போவதற்கு அரசாங்கத்தார் உத்தரவு கொடுக்கமாட்டார்கள்.

Holding of annual examination in December for schools and colleges

* 2459 Q.—SRI A. RATNAM : Will the Hon. Minister for Finance be pleased to state whether there is a proposal under the consideration of Government to hold annual examination in schools and colleges in the State in the month of December?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : The answer is " Yes ", Sir.

Release of stocks of rice by the Central Government

* 2460 Q.—SRI P. RANGASWAMY REDDIAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(a) whether large stocks of rice have been released for sale by the Central Government in April 1955;

(b) whether the price of rice in Madras markets has fallen as a consequence of the said release;

(c) whether any steps have been taken by the State Government to prevent or check the fall in prices; and

(d) if so, with what results?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (a) A quantity of about 13,490 tons (in terms of rice) was released for sale by the Government of India from the Central Storage in different centres in Madras State during April 1955.

(b) Though the release of Central Stocks of rice by the Government of India had some depressing effect on the prices of rice in Madras markets, it was only one of the causes for the slight decline in the price of rice. Other factors such as the availability of plentiful stocks in the markets, general nervousness and weakening of demand, lack of financial resources with the cultivators and their consequent anxiety to dispose of the stocks quickly and realize money to meet their urgent needs, etc., also contributed to the decline of prices. But the prices did not go below the uneconomic level, in any Centre in the State.

It is seen from the papers that there is keen demand for rice in the markets and that the prices have advanced for the stocks released by the Government of India as well as for other stocks, in the markets.

(c) & (d) With a view to watch the trend of prices of foodgrains and other agricultural commodities in the markets of the State and to take immediate steps to check a fall in prices below the economic level wherever necessary, the Government have constituted a small *Ad Hoc* Committee with the Commissioner of

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Civil Supplies as the Chairman and the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Industries and Commerce, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies and the Director of Statistics as members. The Committee meets once a week, reviews the prices of the various agricultural commodities and submits a report to the Government suggesting, if necessary, suitable action for price stabilization in respect of the commodities the prices of which have gone below the economic level. The Government of India were also keeping a close watch on the trend of prices and in case the prices declined justifying Government purchases, appropriate action would be taken immediately. The Board of Revenue (Civil Supplies) has been asked to keep ready a skeleton scheme for starting purchase action, which may be put into operation immediately the price of rice goes below the economic level. The State Government have thus taken all precautionary measures to prevent a steep fall in the price of rice in this State below the critical level and will see that price support is given whenever necessary.

SRI K. R. SAMBANDAM: What is the policy of the Government with respect to fall of prices of goodgrains? Is it to maintain a reasonable level of prices of foodgrains and save the cultivators or to allow free marketing?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: Exactly so, Sir. That is what I have just explained in my statement.

SRI S. SWAYAMPRAKASAM: May I know from the Hon. Minister what the economic level per bag is according to the investigation made by the Advisory Committee now and what is the price per bag prevailing now?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: The economic level has been put down as Rs. 11·23 per maund.

SRI P. SELVARAJ: May I know whether the price support is intended only for rice or for other food commodities also?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: This relates only to rice, Sir. If there is need for price support with reference to other commodities, that will be looked into.

Ramanathapuram Collector's visit to Ceylon

* 2461 *Q.*—SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Collector of Ramanathapuram paid a visit to Ceylon during March 1955;

(*b*) whether the visit was official or private;

(*c*) if the visit was private, whether he obtained leave for the period of absence and permission to leave the district before departure; and

(*d*) whether the Government have received a complaint from one Ganapathi that the Collector left the district without permission?